

Message Text

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SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 RSC-01 NSC-05 ACDA-05 BIB-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6971

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 1705

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: IZVESTIYA COMMENT ON DETENTE

REF: MOSCOW 827

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1. SUMMARY. IMPORTANT IZVESTIYA COMMENTARY BY BOVIN (FEBRUARY 5) DEFENDS AND REAFFIRMS THE USSR'S COMMITMENT TO DETENTE, BUT FORCEFULLY MAKES THE POINT THAT AN "APPROPRIATE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE" MUST BE CREATED IF RECENT POSITIVE CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ARE TO BEAR THE HOPED-FOR RESULTS. BOVIN SAYS SUCCESS OF THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS IS ESSENTIAL FOR DETENTE'S SUCCESS, BUT CRITICIZES RECENT "SHORTSIGHTED" ACTIONS BY CONGRESS AND U.S. THREATS AGAINST OIL PRODUCERS AS SHOWING THAT CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ESTABLISHING THAT "MINIMUM OF TRUST" NEEDED TO REALIZE DETENTE'S POSSIBILITIES ARE NOT ALWAYS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. BOVIN SAYS THAT THE THREAT TO DETENTE SHOULD NOT BE OVERESTIMATED BECAUSE THE WEST UNDERSTANDS THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR. BUT HE WARNS THAT WHILE THE USSR WILL DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE DETENTE IRREVERSIBLE, "THAT WHICH DEPENDS ON OTHERS THEY MUST DO WITH A FULL MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY." BOVIN'S ARTICLE IS FAR MORE ADMONITORY THAN HIS JANUARY 18 COMMENTARY ON THE TRADE ACT (REFTEL), AND MORE CRITICAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION (AS OPPOSED TO CONGRESS). END SUMMARY.

2. BOVIN SAYS THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF DEBATE FOR AND AGAINST DETENTE THE PROCESS AND THE SEARCH FOR PATHS AWAY FROM A BALANCE OF FEAR TO A BALANCE OF REASON CONTINUE. IN THIS, HE ASSERTS, THE SALT TALKS ARE A PIVOT BECAUSE THEY ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF NUCLEAR WAR. THE DECLINE OF THE THREAT OF SUCH A WAR HAS BEEN A HISTORIC EVENT, AND "FURTHER MUTUAL EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION, AND AFTERWARDS TOWARD A REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR ROCKET POTENTIALS AS WELL AS ARMAMENTS IN GENERAL IS THE MAIN ELEMENT OF DETENTE."

3. MOREOVER, BOVIN CONTINUES, THE CORRELATION OF WORLD FORCES IS NOW SUCH THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME THE CAUSES OF AGGRESSIVE POLICY CAN BE LIMITED AND POSSIBLY ELIMINATED. IN ADDITION, HE ASSERTS, DETENTE'S SIGNIFICANCE TRANSCENDS CLASSIC POLITICAL BOUNDS. NOW ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND OTHER NON-POLITICAL PROBLEMS INCREASINGLY INTRUDE INTO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THESE GLOBAL PROBLEMS CANNOT BE RESOLVED BY ONE STATE OR A GROUP OF STATES, AND IT IS OBVIOUS THAT ONLY A FURTHERING OF DETENTE AND CURTAILMENT OF THE ARMS RACE CAN CREATE THE FAVORABLE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AND YIELD THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR FRUITFUL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. FINALLY, BOVIN ASSERTS, THE SOCIAL CHANGES GOING ON THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ATTEST TO THE EXHAUSTION OF CAPITALISM'S POTENTIAL. AND
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WHILE ARGUMENTS ABOUT IDEOLOGY CANNOT BE RESOLVED BY NUCLEAR ROCKET ARGUMENTATION, IT IS NAIVE TO ASSUME THAT NUCLEAR PARITY ENTAILS THE MAINTENANCE OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STATUS QUO.

4. ALL THIS, BOVIN ASSERTS, MEANS THAT POLITICAL LOGIC YIELDS NO ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTE, THE DIRECT AIM OF WHICH IS THE PREVENTION OF WAR AND THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY. HOWEVER, BOVIN ASSERTS, BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE NOT COMPUTERS, LOGIC IS

NOT ENOUGH. THERE MUST ALSO BE AN "APPROPRIATE ATMOSPHERE," A "MINIMUM OF TRUST" WITHOUT WHICH LOGIC CAN BECOME POWERLESS, REFERRING TO THE U.S., BOVIN SAYS THAT THIS ELEMENTARY CONCERN IS NOT ALWAYS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. IN THIS REGARD ONE SHOULD RECALL THE SHORTSIGHTED POSITIONS OF CERTAIN CIRCLES IN CONGRESS OR THE STATEMENTS BY U.S. LEADERS (SHORTHAND FOR THE SECRETARY) ABOUT THE POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE AGAINST OIL PRODUCERS. BOVIN CHARACTERIZES THESE STATEMENTS AS ATTEMPTS AT THE ARMED "RECOLONIZATION" OF THE ARAB EAST WHICH WOULD YIELD CONSEQUENCES IN COMPARISON WITH WHICH THE WEST'S RESENT ECONOMIC CHAOS WOULD LOOK LIKE THE EMBODIMENT OF ORDER AND STABILITY. EQUALLY STRANGE, BOVIN ASSERTS, ARE REFERENCES TO AMERICA'S UNIQUE ROLE AS THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF THE WORLD'S MILITARY BALANCE WHICH, THOUGH WELCOMED IN SEOUL AND SAIGON, MAY RECEIVE A DIFFERENT REACTION IN OTHER WESTERN CAPITALS.

5. THE WORLD, BOVIN CLAIMS, MUST MOVE TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN WHICH "A SHOW OF SELECTED HANDS WILL NOT BE ALL-POWERFUL." TO INSIST OTHERWISE, TO PRETEND TO A "HALO OF EXCLUSIVENESS," HE ASSERTS, PLACES IN QUESTION THE SINCERITY OF ONE'S INTENTIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA AND DOES NOT HELP THE PROCESS OF DETENTE. NONETHELESS, BOVIN CLAIMS, THE DANGER SHOULD NOT BE OVERSTATED BECAUSE THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR IS UNDERSTOOD, AND NEITHER THE AMERICAN NOR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT CAN FAIL TO CONSIDER IT.

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 1705

6. THUS, BOVIN CONCLUDES, DETENTE CONTINUES. HOWEVER, DETENTE IS A SERIOUS BUSINESS, AND THE DUPLICITY OF IMPERIALIST POLICY WILL NOT DISAPPEAR TOMORROW. THE SOVIET PEOPLE THUS SEE THE PLUSES AND MINUSES IN THE PRESENT SITUATION, AND THE USSR WILL DO EVERYTHING REQUIRED OF IT TO JUSTIFY THE HOPES OF PEOPLES AND TO SECURE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE IRREVERSIBILITY OF THE POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA. HOWEVER, HE WARNS, "THAT WHICH DEPENDS ON OTHERS THEY MUST DO WITH FULL MEASURE OF RESPONSIBILITY."

7. COMMENT. IN BOTH TONE AND SUBSTANCE BOVIN'S ARTICLE DIFFERS FROM HIS JANUARY 18 COMMENTARY, WHICH WAS INTENDED PRIMARILY TO REGISTER THE FACT THAT IMPAIRMENT TO BILATERAL RELATIONS CAUSED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS NOT GRAVELY AFFECTED DETENTE. IN THE FEBRUARY 5 PIECE, BOVIN IS MORE PESSIMISTIC AND MORE CRITICAL. HIS CRITICISM IS NOT FOR CONGRESS ALONE, BUT ALSO FOR THE ADMINISTRATION. AND HE EXPANDS ON HIS EARLIER EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS OT THE POINT WHERE HE QUESTIONS U.S. INTENTIONS NOT JUST IN THE TRADE AREA, BUT IN GENERAL. HE PUTS SALT IN A SPECIAL CATEGORY--TOO IMPORTANT TO FALL VICTIM TO CHANGING WINDS. BUT, HE HINTS, SOVIET ACTIONS IN OTHER AREAS MAY DEPENDED ON MOSCOW'S PERCEPTION OF U.S. WILLINGNESS TO ACCOMMODATE SPECIFIC SOVIET INTERESTS.

8. THE BOVIN ARTICLE IS SOMEWHAT OUT OF KILTER WITH THE POSITIVE EMPHASIS THE SOVIET PRESS HAS GIVEN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP SINCE THE SALT TALKS RECONVENED. NOR, INDEED, DOES IT SQUARE WITH PRAVDA'S FEBRUARY 6 REPLAY OF PRESIDENT FORDS'S ATLANTA REFERENCE TO BREZHNEV'S FORTHCOMING VISIT, WHICH WAS CARRIED AT THE TOP OF PAGE 4 UNDER A BOLDFACE THREE-COLUMN HEADLINE SAYING "GERALD FORD ON THE COMING VISIT OF L.I. BREZHNEV TO THE USA." THUS, IT IS NOT

ENTIRELY CLEAR HOW IMPORTANT A WARNING SIGNAL THIS TOUGH COMMENTARY IS INTENDED TO BE.
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